

POLICY 141: Advocacy for Public Education

The Board of Education of School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) supports positive advocacy to enhance public education in the province of BC. The Board's advocacy for public education is based on respect for democratic processes and on the goal of building a healthy public education system in general, specifically through the provision of adequate funding and strengthening equity within the system.

The Board's advocacy will support the mandate for public education as outlined in the Statement of [Education Policy Order](#), the [Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy](#), and the [Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) aligned to the Board's Strategic Plan with alignment to the Board Work Plan. As stated in the Education Policy Order, "the purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy".

The Board of Education will support an advocacy approach in advancing public education and will refrain from lobbying or activism.

Procedures:

Support for advocacy may occur through a variety of avenues, such as urging the federal, provincial, and local governments, building awareness and developing strategic relationships and informed allies among local governments and community groups, and positioning the district as an engaged and cooperative community resource.

Internally, the Board's advocacy will be focussed on continuing to build respectful awareness and building relationships with rights holders and partner groups through a practice of continuous engagement.

The Board of Education will develop or renew its advocacy plan each December and report its progress in May.

Definitions

Advocacy: Advocacy seeks to create change through building understanding and advancing relationships over time. Advocacy comes from a place of partnership and is more often about finding mutual ground and focusing on win-win outcomes.

Advocacy promotes the role (and necessity) of Boards of Education by:

- Championing public education,
- Establishing credibility within and beyond the community,
- Building trust and confidence,
- Nurturing and enhancing internal and external relationships, and

- Sharing and amplifying student and community voices and needs.

Advocacy should:

- Align with the district's mission and vision statements,
- Align with the district's strategic plan, and
- Adhere to the district's policy.

Lobbying: Lobbying is an attempt to directly influence specific legislation through meetings or communications with a politician. Lobbyists are paid to communicate or arrange a meeting for the purposes of lobbying with a public office holder to influence any matters set out in the Lobbyists Transparency Act. Lobbyists in B.C. must register with the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists of B.C. Registered lobbyists must submit monthly reports about whom they met with and why, which you can view on the registrar's website. There are separate regulations for federal lobbyists.

Lobbying is:

- Often reactive, in response to specific legislation
- A targeted strategy
- A specific plan, one outcome
- More successful post-advocacy

Activism: Activism is an active process that often includes petitions, letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, rallies and more. Activism is a form of campaigning for change based on direct action.